

Offenders offer help building Habitat homes

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By Jo Chiparo, Staff Writer

JASONVILLE -- Offenders from the Wabash Valley Correctional Facility are busy applying decking, nailing shingles and working on porches of the two Habitat for Humanity homes being built in Jasonville.

"We are doing just a little bit of everything," explained Rick Brinson the construction coordinator who is supervising the offenders. "The volunteer and church groups had framing, walls and trusses set before we came. It's great these guys (from WVCF) can come out and help us."

The WVCF officer in charge of the crew, Lisa Ball, said, "The guys (offenders) like doing this kind of work because they can see what they have done. It's not like sweeping a street where after a rain or wind it is dirty again."

Busy sawing boards, Carlton Cosby, an offender originally from Madison, said he liked working on the Habitat project.

"It gives me a sense of accomplishment, and most of all, somebody is going to get some use out of it."

Cosby, who will be released in eight months, said he had been in the concrete business and is stretching his skills to include carpentry, but he loves it.

Another offender, John Kester from Sullivan who worked in heating and air-conditioning prior to his incarceration, said he likes to get out in the community and do something worthwhile.

"This is not what we do every day," noted Kester. "It's a change of pace. They even told us we might get to meet the families who are moving into the homes."

This is the first time that offenders have helped with a Habitat House explained Harry Huber, president of Greene County HFH.

"I'm excited they are helping. It gives them the opportunity to give back to the community," Huber noted. "By working two weeks, it is like donating 10 Saturdays, and in building two houses, we can use the help."

Apostle churches that have volunteered work on the two homes are Jasonville Lawton Street Christian Church, Jasonville Assembly of God, Linton First Christian, Saron United Church of Christ, and St. Peters Catholic Church.

Huber noted that Sam Lehman, Paul McHenry and Dave Parker, along with their crews, were extremely instrumental in donating their expertise, which is speeding up the construction of the homes.

HFH is an ecumenical housing ministry that welcomes work volunteers of all faiths and is known throughout the world for housing families. Nearly 25,000 homes are built per year.

The families moving into the two homes are Deb Cox and children and Jack and Cindy Denney and family.

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